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SUBJECT: TYPHOON PRAPIROON SWEEPS THROUGH SOUTH CHINA

REF: A) BEIJING 15315
B) GUANGZHOU 25021

11. (U) TYPHOON PRAPIROON MADE LANDFALL IN SOUTHERN CHINA'S GUANGDONG PROVINCE ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 3RD, SWEEPING THROUGH AN AREA ALREADY DAMAGED BY TYPHOONS BILIS AND KAEMI (REFS A AND B). NO AMCITS HAVE BEEN REPORTED KILLED OR INJURED. THE GOVERNMENT AND THE MEDIA REPORT A TOTAL OF 80 PEOPLE KILLED AND 9 MISSING. DESPITE BEING DOWNGRADED FROM A TYPHOON TO A TROPICAL STORM ON AUGUST 4TH, THE STORM CONTINUED TO LASH SOUTHERN CHINA WITH HEAVY WINDS AND TORRENTIAL RAIN OVER THE WEEKEND. ESTIMATES ARE THAT 844,000 PEOPLE WERE EVACUATED, 30,000 HOUSES COLLAPSED, AND THAT THE STORM AFFECTED 10 MILLION PEOPLE.

12. (U) IN PREPARATION FOR THE STORM, FERRIES AND RAIL LINES BETWEEN HAINAN AND GUANGDONG WERE SUSPENDED ON THURSDAY AND 53,000 FISHING VESSELS WERE CALLED INTO HARBOR. AN ESTIMATED 530,000 PEOPLE WERE EVACUATED FROM THE STORM'S PROJECTED COURSE AND THE GUANGDONG PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT CLAIMS TO HAVE SENT WARNING MESSAGES TO 11 MILLION CELL PHONES TO WARN THE PUBLIC OF THE TYPHOON'S ARRIVAL.

13. (U) GUANGDONG BORE THE BRUNT OF PRAPIROON'S FORCE. THE TYPHOON MADE LANDFALL AT 7:20 PM ON THURSDAY NIGHT IN YANGXI AND DIANBAI COUNTIES. THE MEDIA REPORTS 54 CONFIRMED DEATHS IN GUANGDONG PROVINCE. DAMAGE FROM PRAPIROON IN GUANGDONG IS ESTIMATED AT RMB 5.4 BILLION (APPROXIMATELY USD 675 MILLION).

14. (U) ALTHOUGH PRAPIROON WAS DOWNGRADED FROM A TYPHOON TO A TROPICAL STORM ON FRIDAY, IT SWEEPED WESTWARD TO THE GUANGXI AUTONOMOUS REGION. FLASH FLOODS AND LANDSLIDES KILLED 26 PEOPLE THERE. THE GUANGXI CIVIL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT TOLD THE PRESS THAT PRAPIROON AFFECTED 5.1 MILLION PEOPLE IN THE REGION, DAMAGED 195,900 HECTARES OF FARMLAND AND TOPPLED 9,300 HOUSES.

15. (U) THE FULL EXTENT OF THE GOVERNMENT RESPONSE IS STILL UNCLEAR. THE MEDIA IS REPORTING THAT THE GUANGDONG PROVINCIAL TAXATION DEPARTMENT IS INSTITUTING EIGHT PREFERENTIAL POLICIES, INCLUDING EXEMPTION FROM INCOME TAXES FOR THOSE IN AREAS HIT BY THE TYPHOON. IN GUANGXI, CONCERNS OVER DISEASE OUTBREAKS PROMPTED THE GOVERNMENT TO SEND TEAMS OF HEALTH WORKERS TO THE AFFECTED AREAS TO INSTRUCT RESIDENTS ABOUT PROPER SANITATION.

MARTIN